

REMARKS

This Response is submitted in reply to the non-final Office Action of February 2, 2009. Claims 1–6, 8–12, 14–19, 21–31, 33–44, 46–55, 57–65 and 67–71 are pending. An Information Disclosure Statement is submitted herewith.

I Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §101

The Office Action rejected Claims 1–6, 8–12, 14–19, 21–31, 33–34, 46–55, 57–65 and 67–71 under 35 U.S.C. §101 as being directed to non-statutory subject matter. Applicants respectfully disagree.

Astonishingly, the Office Action states, "The Office has not yet considered the Bilski case or incorporated it into the MPEP. Accordingly, no comments will be made on the case and its applicability to the instant invention until such time." Applicant respectfully submits that the Office Action has admitted its own legal insufficiency. The Bilski case is precedential case law that the Office must follow. The Office and its examiners are not free to ignore this case until such time as the Office gets around to incorporating the Bilski case into the MPEP, yet the Office Action admits it ignored the law. Applicant is entitled to have the present invention examined in view of the present state of the law and demands that the next action, if not a Notice of Allowance, be made non-final due to the legal insufficiency of the Office Action of February 2, 2009. Applicant also insists that the Bilski decision be considered when the rejections to the present application are reconsidered.

In *In Re Bilski* (Fed. Cir. 2008, 07-1130 order), the Court states, "A claimed process is surely patent-eligible under §101 if: (1) it is tied to a particular machine or apparatus, or (2) it transforms a particular article into a different state or thing." *Id* at 10. Further, the Court went on to note that though a rejected claim of *Benson* arguably operated on a machine, the claim's tie to the machine did not reduce the preemptive

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footprint of the claim because all uses of the algorithm were still covered by the claim. *Id* at 12–13 [discussing *Gottschalk v. Benson*, 409 U.S. 63 (1972)].

With respect to Claim 27, it is respectfully submitted that the claim is tied to a particular machine, and further, that tying the claim to this particular machine reduces the preemptive footprint of the claim because not all uses of the algorithm are covered by the claim. Specifically, Claim 27 requires not just a system, but a system having a processor, a memory, at least one microphone and an output device. Further, the output device of the system outputs a probability density and a number of speakers from the probability density. Further still, Claim 27 requires an approximation module computing an approximation of a posterior distribution for the selected modeling parameter based on an input set of data, the input set of data having been obtained from the at least one microphone, and a current estimate of a posterior distribution of at least one unselected modeling parameter in the plurality of modeling parameters.

Thus, at least some uses of the algorithm are not within the scope of the claim. For example, a machine might not output a number of speakers. In another exemplary machine, the input set of data may not have been obtained from at least one microphone.

For at least the above reasons, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 27 and its dependent claims contain patentable subject matter, and it is respectfully requested that these rejections be withdrawn. For similar reasons, it is respectfully submitted that Claims 1, 14, 39, 50 and 61 and their respective dependent claims contain patentable subject matter, and it is respectfully requested that these rejections be withdrawn.

II Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §112

The Office Action rejected Claims 1–6, 8–12, 14–19, 21–26 and 37 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. Specifically, the Office Action states that the Specification does not disclose how the

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number of speakers is determined. However, the information contained in the specification merely needs to be "...sufficient to inform those skilled in the relevant art how to both make and use the claimed invention..." M.P.E.P. §2164. As is demonstrated by the references submitted on the Information Disclosure Statement submitted herewith, specifically, U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 20020055913 and "Unknown–multiple Speaker Clustering using HMM", one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the present application was filed would have understood how to output a number of speakers from the probability density. Thus, the Specification was sufficient to enable one of ordinary skill in the art to both make and use the claimed embodiments.

For at least the above reason, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 1 and its dependent claims are fully enabled by the Specification and are in condition for allowance. For similar reasons, it is respectfully submitted that Claims 14 and 37 and their respective dependent claims are fully enabled by the Specification and are in condition for allowance.

III Allowable Subject Matter

The Office Action notes that Claims 1–6, 8–12, 14–19, 21–31, 33–34, 46–55, 57–65 and 67–71 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejections based on 35 U.S.C. §§101 and 112. As discussed above, the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§101 and 112 should be withdrawn. It is therefore respectfully requested that all pending claims be allowed.

IV M.P.E.P. §707.07(j)

M.P.E.P. §707.07(j) states:

"...If the examiner is satisfied after the search has been completed that patentable subject matter has been disclosed and the record indicates that the applicant intends to claim such subject matter, the examiner may note in the

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Office action that certain aspects or features of the patentable invention have not been claimed and that if properly claimed such claims may be given favorable consideration..."

Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner make Applicants aware of any subject matter disclosed by the present application which the Examiner believes is patentable. By doing so, the Examiner would help expedite prosecution by enabling Applicants to amend the present claims or draft new claims directed to such subject matter.

CONCLUSION

Accordingly, in view of the above remarks it is submitted that the claims are patentably distinct over the cited references and that all the rejections to the claims have been overcome. Reconsideration and reexamination of the above Application is requested. Based on the foregoing, Applicants respectfully requests that the pending claims be allowed, and that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. If the Examiner believes, after this response, that the application is not in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the Applicant's attorney at the telephone number listed below.

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If this response is not considered timely filed and if a request for an extension of time is otherwise absent, Applicants hereby request any necessary extension of time. If there is a fee occasioned by this response, including an extension fee that is not covered by an enclosed check please charge any deficiency to Deposit Account No. 50-0463.

Respectfully submitted,
Microsoft Corporation

Date: May 4, 2009

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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being electronically deposited with the USPTO via EFS-Web on the date shown below:

May 4, 2009
Date

/Noemi Tovar/
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